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A method is provided for the identification of a compound which affects mRNA stability, in particular induces mRNA degradation, in which a DNA expression system which in the absence of test compound is capable of expressing a protein having a detectable signal, wherein the mRNA which codes for the protein and which is transcribed from the expression system comprises at least one copy of a mRNA instability sequence, is contacted with a test compound and the detectable signal is measured in the presence of the test compound and compared with a control. The method may be used to identify compounds which induce degradation of mRNA, e.g. cytokine (e.g. IL-1 β) mRNA, which when inappropriately stabilised can give rise to diseases or medical conditions, e.g. cytokine induced inflammatory disease.